Published Articles

of Chandramowly

DH Avenues

Wednesday, December 27, 2006

Leadership Competency Series

Discover Your Strength for a Sure Win

Discovering that hidden treasure called 'Strength' (Part 1)

Success follows when one discovers 'strengths' and plays it up rather than attempting to remove weaknesses and convert them into strengths. Discover what you like and what you do best, and you will emerge the winner says M R Chandramowly.

Diwakaran once again examined his ticket. Yes. It is I Class AC. He entered the compartment and placed his luggage down, firmly holding on to his handbag. He was happy about his decision to return closing his business in Delhi. With his careful planning, he sold his business and encashed all his assets. He suddenly felt the heaviness of the handbag.

The golden biscuits are safe in there. That is good enough to takeover the shop at T R Nagar. He looked at his watch. In another ten minutes the train chugs away towards Chennai leaving behind the crowded Delhi station. He looked at the co-traveller who was entering his cabin. Karan came in and sat on the opposite vacant seat.

His scrupulous search did not go wrong. He had failed only twice in robbing elite passengers. It is not easy to know the destination and journey date of lonely rich travellers like Diwakaran. Karan smiled at him and after mutual introduction, Diwakaran re-examined his handbag, arranged the gold pieces properly, excused himself to visit the rest room and went out in the corridor with his bag. The glimpses of gold charged Karan.

In search of gold

The train is moving fast and on his return Diwakaran read some files and made some notes. As time elapsed both had dinner. By the time Karan disposed the meal wrap, freshened up and came in, Diwakaran was sleeping. Karan waited for the right time and started his work. He looked at Diwakaran who was in deep sleep and softly pulled down the zipper of the handbag and found only some files and papers. No trace of gold biscuits.

He searched the other bags, looked at sleeping Diwakaran for any sign of bulge of

biscuits. Karan got tired and went back to his berth but couldn't sleep.

Next day morning Diwakaran got up hearing the noise of tea vendor's and found Karan still asleep. On completing morning routines he was enjoying his coffee by the time Karan got up and proceeded for wash.

When Karan returned from the rest room he was shocked to see Diwakaran counting the gold biscuits and arranging them to fit the handbag. He reassured himself that he had one more chance tonight and he will certainly find out where the biscuits are hidden.

The day phased out and both of them retired after their dinner. Karan waited laying still. After few hours he carried out his search. This time more slowly, perfectly and without taking any chance. Unfortunately he could not trace the treasure and had to spend sleepless night.

Next morning he woke up and saw Diwakaran sipping his coffee. Karan also ordered for some coffee, freshened, came back and baffled to see Diwakaran aligning the treasure intact. He was sad and worried.

Not for wasting two days and spending money on tickets but for his professional failure of intelligence. When the train reached Chennai Central, Diwakaran thanked Karan for accompanying him, Karan responded the same but he could not resist his curiosity any more and asked Diwakaran where he hid the gold. Sleepless and tired, Karan had to balance himself avoiding physical collapse when Diwakaran replied in poise "under your pillow where you never searched". (Modified parable of Swami Chinmayananda).

Discover the success switch

The main switch that makes all sensitive points active is within us. It is neither in a book nor in training programs. Is it there in a mentoring session or in self-development software package? It isn't. The switch is within us. One must discover that hidden treasure. How? By introspection and looking within for what we enjoy doing and what we are good at doing something.

We can call that as individual core competency. Unless we discover that we would be doing things aimlessly without discovering our own latent abilities. Corporate managers spend most of their time in analysing poor performance of the bottom 10 employees rather than understanding the success factors of top 20 employees. Parents and teachers highlight on lowest marks of children rather than their highs to build on. And importantly, most of the individual aspirants of leadership focus on fixing their weak areas than building on their strengths.

Start building

Fixing weak areas will not make everything right; and strong areas cannot take care of themselves without re-honing. When you can easily buy a singing bird, it is a waste of time to teach a pig to sing; besides it annoys the pig. First discover your strengths and focus on them. Weaknesses can be periodically managed.

An international human resource research of SRI Gallup studied over 250,000 successful people in various fields came to three major conclusions.

Discovering and focusing on strengths creates a new theory of what people are like. Discovering and focusing on strengths maximises productivity and manage weaknesses. Lastly the study of strength leads to an understanding of differentiating between good and great.

Remembering role-models

Great achievers and leaders always discover their strengths and build on it. When their strength reaches its pinnacle, it magnetises others to get attracted. Search for Truth became Gandhiji's mission and it got converted into a powerful weapon of 'Sathyagraha'.

In all her concerts M S Subbulakshmi completely involved and vibrated each note of her music with emotional commitment and that made her the gem of India and not the other singers inspite of their having better knowledge or voice than her. There is something other than 'engineering' that made Sir M Visvesvaraiah to rise to greatest level.

There were better engineers than him then and are there now. But how many can have his vision, dexterity, simplicity and dedication? Rahul Dravid's core competency is his defensive bating using which he blocks any type of delivery, which makes him the 'wall' of Indian cricket.

Einstein honed on his math skills, which lead to the theory of relativity than focusing to improve his history knowledge in which he failed. Actor Rajnikanth's discovered and focused on his own 'style' which elevated him to the level of highest paid super star in Asia after Jackie Chan.

People become successful based on two things. Their strengths and the external advantages they have. If you are an MBA it is not your strength it is an advantage.

Imagination—your strength

If you are highly imaginative, it is your strength. If your uncle is an MLA it is just an advantage, but if you can motivate people it is strength. If you have many friends you have an advantage and if you are friendly, that's your strength. Owning a

computer is an advantage but programming a computer is strength.

Discover your strengths and build on it. Find out what you don't do well and stop doing it. There is no alchemy to remove all the weaknesses and transform those to strengths. The goal therefore is to discover strengths, build on it while the weaknesses are managed.

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